A

PLAN

For improving the TRADE at

SENEGAL.

ADDRESSED TO

The Lords Commissioners for TRADE and PLANTATIONS.

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INTRODUCTION.

IT has been a maxim among the European Nations, ſince they began to trade to Africa (from what policy I cannot imagine) to carry the African Blacks to the Weſt-Indies, and there compell them to plant and prepare Sugars and other Commodities; I ſay compell them, for no man in his ſenſes will willingly work, unleſs he

expects a recompence for his labour, which is never the caſe with Slaves.

It is well known to people who have travelled, and been attentive to the ways of men in different countries and ſtations of life, that a free labouring man, in a free country, where the fruits of his labour are entirely at his own diſpoſal, works harder than any Slave in any part of the world. A Porter in London does more work in one day than any four Slaves in the Weſt-Indies in the ſame ſpace of time. This is not owing to the difference of climates; for a Black's conſtitution is ſuited to a hot country, and agrees well there with labour.

Not a few White people in the Weſt-Indies imagine that the Blacks are naturally lazy and wicked beyond the reſt of mankind, which is not fact. But they may with good reaſon affirm, that Slaves of all ſorts are very lazy, and extremely addicted to thoſe kinds of wickedneſs that offend and

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and diſturb Society. This may be proved daily in the countries where they dwell, by the ſevere, cruel, and horrible correction they receive, as the due reward of their deeds from juſt and humane maſters, as well as from the wicked, unjuſt, and cruel.

Now it can be proved, that this lazineſs and wickedneſs with which the African Blacks are charged, proceeds only from their ſlavery. For when African Blacks, of the ſame nations with thoſe who are Slaves in the Weſt-Indies, are carried to the province of Penſilvania in North America, where a Slave is only one in name, as he has the ſame benefit from the laws of the country with his maſter, there we find them to be chearfully induſtrious, and their manners equal to thoſe of the natives of that province.

For another proof, I might mention the free Black ſailors, who have ſerved in the Engliſh navy in the late war. I appeal to thoſe who have had occaſion to obſerve

them, if they were not generally as good ſeamen, and as brave, as the Engliſh ſailors, and withall better members of ſociety.

It is impoſſible for Europeans, and other white people, to undergo half the labour and care in hot countries, which they are accuſtomed to ſuffer in their own: There is ſomething in their conſtitutions that does not ſuit with the air and climate of thoſe places ſituated between the tropicks, as we have often occaſion to obſerve, when we conſider the great mortality among white people in thoſe parts of the world, and how, inſtead of multiplying their ſpecies, they can ſcarce keep up their original number, notwithſtanding the many recruits they annually receive from their mother countries, for in fact white people are not the natives of the Weſt-Indies: If ſo, why were we at firſt, and now continue to be at ſuch pains, at the hazard of our lives and deſtruction of the human race, to carry poor wretches from Africa to the Weſt-Indies to torture them

them with cruel puniſhments, for, by the nature of their ſlavery, they do not there increaſe their ſpecies more than their ſevere maſters.

Would it not have been better, when we firſt traded to Africa, to have taught the natives civility by introducing liberty and a good form of government among them, teaching them how to cultivate their lands, and ſo trade with them for the produce thereof, ſuch as Indico, Cotton, Sugar &c.—I ſay, would it not have been better to have done this than to have carried them over to the Weſt-Indies to compel them by whips and tortures to raiſe the above commodities there? For certain I am, that if thoſe Slaves were all ſet at liberty, and obliged by neceſſity to work for their ſubſiſtence, they could be hired to plant and prepare ſugars &c. ſo as to raiſe them cheaper, than by the preſent method of purchaſing Slaves and maintaining them for that purpoſe.

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Now, indeed, it would be almoſt impoſſible to ſtop the Slave-trade, or alter the conſtitution of the Sugar iſlands; but I imagine I could propoſe a plan for ſettling a new colony (on a much better footing than that of our Sugar iſlands) in Florida, the Iſlands formerly called Neutral, and Senegal; but I ſhall confine myſelf ſolely to the means of ſettling and improving the trade of the laſt-mentioned place.

THE PLAN.

THE river Senegal ſprings in the mountains Guangara, which ly eaſt two hundred leagues diſtant from the neareſt part of the Atlantic ocean to them. It is navigable at all times of the year for flat-bottomed boats or veſſels, not exceeding one hundred tons burthen, to the diſtance of ninety or one hundred leagues from its influx into the Atlantic ocean: But in the ſeaſon when the river is ſwelled by the heavy rains, it is navigable to veſſels of the forementioned burthen, as high as the cataract of Felu, which is at the diſtance of more than 250 leagues from its mouth including windings and turnings.

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In the country adjacent to that cataract, is much Gold, Elephants teeth and a great trade for Slaves: But the air of thoſe places, in that ſeaſon of the year, when it is poſſible to ſail to them, is ſo exceſſively pernicious to the conſtitutions of White people, that the proſpect of the greateſt gain cannot tempt any to adventure to ſail to them. It is certain that the Engliſh after they had taken Senegal from the French, ſent a company of ſoldiers up the river in a veſſel to take poſſeſſion of the French fort, in the country of Galam, the conſequences of which were, that every one of them dyed in their paſſage going up. Next year a company was ſent up the river, but better accommodated than the firſt; and the third year another, ſtill better provided with veſſels and convenient lodging; the conſequence was, that out of the two companies there only returned to Fort-Lewis, at the mouth of the river from whence they ſet out, a ſurgeon's mate, a ſearjeant and thirteen private men, all the reſt periſhed

in the ſpace of about 16 months, and moſt of them before the veſſels reached the country of Galam.

The French, indeed, had better ſucceſs in ſending the White people to the country of Galam: for, by their long experience, they were enabled to take better methods for ſending them up, and precautions againſt the infectious air, but when their people reached Galam, they were incapable of applying themſelves vigorouſly to commerce; had enough to do in the dry ſeaſon to recover the diſtreſs they ſuffered in the rainy one, and to lay in a ſtock of ſtrength ſufficient to combat the next bad ſeaſon: So that traffick went on in a feeble and diſorderly manner, their orders concerning it being executed by their Slaves, could not, in the nature of things, turn out to any great account; yet I wonder much how they managed ſo well, and ſent ſuch a quantity of Gold and Slaves down the river to Fort-Lewis as they did.

The north ſide of the river is properly the country of the White people, for few Blacks live there, but the Arabs and Africans, called Azanaga, wander in it in the dry ſeaſon. But when the rains begin to fall, they wander far from the banks of the river (about 50 or 60 leagues to the northward of it) to avoid the danger of being ſeized with the diſtempers natural to the Countries adjacent to the river in the ſeaſon of the rains.

The ſouth ſide of the river is inhabited by Blacks, who dwell in towns and ſettled habitations. They don't fly from the rains, like the White people, the Arabs, and Azanaga; having no reaſon to be afraid, as their conſtitutions are well ſuited to that climate.

The firſt Black people we find on the ſouth banks of the Senegal, adjacent to the ocean, are the Jolloiffs, or, as they call themſelves, Woulloffs.—To the eaſtward of them live the Pholeys, whoſe country is of great

great extent; beyond them, to the eaſt, dwell the Saracoliz, whoſe country extends to the cataract of Felu. Thoſe nations have each a different language from the other, but they all generally profeſs the Mahometan religion, altho' there are ſome Pagans among them.

It is impoſſible to civilize any of thoſe Blacks, living in ſubjection to any of their own princes, or forms of government, ſo as to give them a reliſh for trade, or make them induſtrious. This is owing entirely to the nature of their government, which will render every attempt of that kind abortive.

But in the Engliſh ſettlement, viz. the iſland of Fort St. Lewis, near the mouth of the river Senegal, there are about 800 able bodied Blacks and Mulattoes of different nations and religions, ſubjects of Great Britain, one third of whom are free, being moſtly Mulattoes deſcended from a mixture

of Blacks and French. They all profeſs the faith of the church of Rome, the reſt are almoſt all Slaves to thoſe Mulattoes and free Blacks, two thirds of which Slaves are Mahometans, and the reſt are Pagans. I am very certain that a very great trade may be carried on in the river Senegal, by means of theſe Blacks and Mulattoes in St. Lewis.

The firſt ſtep in this deſign, muſt be the eſtabliſhment of a civil government among them, for at preſent the form of government prevailing there is as bad and abſolute as that in Morocco. I don't mean the Engliſh military government, that has ſubſiſted at Senegal, ſince it was taken from the French. The Engliſh governor does not, nor well can meddle in their affairs, only he will not allow them to put any perſon to death, and takes care to ſee juſtice done between them and the Engliſh.

In this civil Government, in order that there may be no partiality, all the free inhabitants,

habitants, Black, White, and Mulattoes, ought to have an equal ſhare in it. The magiſtrates to be elected annually, or at any other convenient period of time. The tryal of criminals to be by juries, as in England. Let not the thought of putting Blacks and Whites on a footing ſhock the delicacy of any White perſon; for what is more unmanly, effeminate, or irrational than for a man to value himſelf on the colour of his ſkin? Is there any prejudice ſo fooliſhly weak and ridiculous?

I leave it to better judges what ſort of laws would be moſt proper, and beſt adapted to a civil government there, only I beg to be regarded with attention in what I am now going to mention.

In ſettling a Colony or forming a good government, great care ought to be had not to frame any laws againſt any thing meerly irreligious, nor againſt immorality, except that ſort which immediately affects ſociety. I ſay, immediately, for if we go to draw

inferences

inferences from what may be the conſequence of allowing or winking at a bad example, we ſhall be in the highway towards eſtabliſhing the Inquiſition; for however we may condemn the proceedings of that tribunal, yet if we in the leaſt endeavour to puniſh a man for any crime except violence or fraud, we are certainly impelled by the very ſame principles with thoſe of the holy office.

That thoſe laws againſt irreligion and immorality are the bane of ſociety, and tend towards the deſtruction of a commercial country, or indeed any country, is plain, if we compare the Countries where theſe laws ſubſiſt and are put in force, with the places where they are not, how great ſhall we find the difference. Not to bring ſuch glaring inſtances, as to compare Portugal, Spain, Italy and Barbary, the fineſt countries naturally in the world, with England and Holland, I ſhall confine myſelf to North America, and compare the province of New England, our oldeſt Settlement there,

with that of our lately planted one of Penſilvania, and let any one give me any other tolerably probable reaſon for the one excelling the other ſo much in commerce and improvement of lands &c; but that Penſilvania owns no laws meerly religious, nor puniſhes any man for a crime that does not immediately affect ſociety. Let it be conſidered alſo, that wherever religious laws ſubſiſt and are put in force, there we ſhall find more violence committed, with other crimes that directly affect ſociety, than in countries where ſuch laws have no being.

The next thing to be done for the good of our ſettlement, in Senegal, is to prohibit all the inhabitants of St. Lewis, without diſtinction, from being ſerved by Slaves, but that they ſhould hire ſervants as they can, in the ſame manner as is done in London. I do not mean to hinder the inhabitants from buying Slaves in the river for exportation, but that they ſhould not be employed as Slaves while in St. Lewis. My reaſon

ſon for this prohibition is, that ſlavery is the bane of that ſort of honeſt induſtry, the labour of the hands, which is the foundation and ground work of all commerce, wealth, and perfection of arts and ſciences, which we obſerve in all well regulated and civilized ſtates. How ſlavery is oppoſite to induſtry we may underſtand by the following facts.

In Africa the pooreſt Black, ſo ſoon as he can by violence, fraud, or induſtry procure a Slave, never more puts his hand to labour, not from the principle of lazineſs, but the more powerful one of ſhame; for by working he appears as a Slave, conſequently in ſo deſpicable a light as nothing but the greateſt neceſſity can tempt him to make that uſe of his hands which nature deſigned them for.

It is the ſame caſe with our enfranchiſed Blacks in the Weſt-Indies, who would rather ſtarve or ſteal, after they have ſpent their

their all, than procure a ſubſiſtence by honeſt labour. Nay clowns bred in Great Britain, that go to the Weſt-Indies, after they have been ſix months in that country are aſhamed to be ſeen going along the ſtreets carrying in their hands a ſmall Bundle. So greatly is their delicacy ſhocked at ſeeming to bear the leaſt reſemblance to Slaves. And the European Ladies there, rather than earn their ſubſiſtence by the needle, waſhing, or ſuch like female employment (which would make them appear to be made of the ſame fleſh and blood with Slaves) to avoid, I ſay, ſuch an imputation, they chooſe to follow a more genteel employment well known in all civilized countries.

Again, let us compare the province of Penſilvania where there is no real ſlavery, with the Slave Provinces of Mary-Land, Virginia, and Carolina, and let us mark the difference.

How comes it to paſs that the kingdom of Mexico is ſo well cultivated, ſo full of fine towns of Indians, ſwarming with inhabitants, who live well and eaſy, although they are ſubject to the rude, and moſt barbarous policy of an eccleſiaſtical government? Can this be accounted for any other way than that the generality of the labouring people there are free? Do we ſee ſuch a fine country in any of the French or Engliſh dominions in the Weſt-Indies, or Provinces in North America, where there are few or no labouring people, except the African Slaves?

Conſidering theſe things, I would propoſe that all the Slaves dwelling in the iſland St. Lewis, ſhould be enfranchiſed, the public paying the owners an equitable ſum for their freedom: and as they are moſtly ſailors who are let to hire by their maſters to work in European ſhips and boats that trade in the river Senegal, they can always procure good ſubſiſtence by their labour, in being hired by the White people

ple to go in veſſels and long boats to the country of Galam, and there to trade for them.—It would be good policy in the public to make a gift to thoſe Blacks of fifty long-boats, compleatly fitted to be divided among them. This would be like providing poor induſtrious peaſants in a fertile country, with inſtruments of huſbandry; for the Black maſters of theſe long-boats could eaſily procure goods on credit, from White people in Senegal, who would gladly truſt them, in expectation of returns in Slaves, Gold, and Ivory, from the country of Galam.

Even at this preſent time, the free Blacks in Senegal begin to purchaſe boats from the Engliſh, and trade with them in the river. If they do ſo, under an ill regulated government, how well muſt the trade go on, when it is put on a proper footing?

I am certain, that if the government of

St. Lewis was to be modelled, after the foregoing plan, a great increaſe of commerce muſt ſoon follow. And as by the Peace, no foreigner can have acceſs to the river Senegal, the trade of it, in courſe, will turn much to the advantage of the Engliſh Nation, by encreaſing the number of their ſhipping, and conſumption of their Manufactures.

We ſhould ſoon find in St. Lewis, a great increaſe of Black inhabitants; for the great liberty given in it to peaceable members of ſociety, with the ſecurity of their property, would draw multitudes of people to it from all parts of the continent, as naturally as rivers tend to the ſea.

The Blacks thus enfranchiſed, and formed into order, would be ſtrong enough to defend themſelves from any attack, that the Princes on the continent might make upon them. They would even ſeverely chaſtiſe them, for any injury they might happen

happen to do them (ſuch as ſeizing their boats trading on the river &c.) by ſending a fleet of barks and boats againſt them, to burn their Corn, Houſes &c. and carry the inhabitants into ſlavery. Two or three ſevere examples of this ſort, would ſoon oblige them to alter their behaviour. For at preſent thoſe petty Princes, by their underhand connexion with the governing Blacks of St. Lewis, ſtop and pillage Engliſh ſhips and boats with impunity. The pretence for this impoſition is, that the river belongs to them, and therefore the Europeans ought to pay them tribute for trading on it.

When the Engliſh took Senegal, they imprudently enough agreed with thoſe Princes, to pay them the ſame tribute as the French had done before. This the Engliſh have paid, but it does not in the leaſt procure them the liberty to go freely up and down the river; for thoſe people ſtop them in narrow paſſes where they pleaſe, and oblige them to ſatisfy all their demands.

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As every Engliſh veſſel, going up the river, over and above her crew, carries about twenty five Blacks to aſſiſt in navigating and trading in the river, her crew, and thoſe Blacks, if they were unanimous could by force hinder the Princes from ſtopping or plundering them. But if the Blacks were to join the Whites in forcing their way in the river, their Mulattoe and Black maſters and rulers in St. Lewis would ſoon make them feel their reſentment; for thoſe governing people go partners with the Black Princes in their tribute and rapine. Of this, ſome of our military people at Senegal are ſenſible, but cannot prevent it, as they are not willing, nor are they impowered to interpoſe in civil affairs. And it is impoſſible to remedy this diſorder, otherwiſe than by altering the form of government in St. Lewis.

One objection to this ſcheme of ſettling St. Lewis, may be the great ſum of money wanted, to do it in a proper manner. To this

this I anſwer, that the whole ſum for building a ſmall neat commodious fort, purchaſing the freedom of the Blacks, with a preſent to them of fifty long-boats, compleatly furniſhed, will not amount to more than 30,000*l.* Now if the government will give an excluſive charter, for the term of 25 years, of the whole trade of the river Senegal, and the coaſt between it, and Arguin or Cape Blanco to the North; I ſay, if they will grant ſuch a charter, they may depend on finding people in London, who will engage to puſh the trade, on the propoſed plan, and on the propoſed form of government, paying the 30,000*l.* and moreover will annually pay to the Government, while the charter ſubſiſts, the 13,000*l.* allowed by it to the African committee, for maintaining our forts and caſtles on the coaſt of Africa.

If the Government may be unwilling to grant the propoſed charter, yet the ſum wanted might be raiſed by a duty on all

the gum ſenica, exported from the river Senegal, or Portendaric, of 20*s.* per hundred weight, which would annually amount to 10, 000*l.* This duty could not enable foreigners to ſell thoſe manufactures, which conſume the gum ſeneca at a cheaper rate than we could, becauſe they cannot now procure that commodity ſo cheap from any other part of the world, as from Great-Britain, even although it were burthened with the aforeſaid tax, of 20*s.* per hundred weight.

The next objection againſt the propoſed plan of Government, would probably be this, that though all the world naturally have the ſame ſenſe of right and wrong, yet ſome are ſo debauched by education, as the Mahometans and Roman Catholics, that they are very ready to be partial, in the adminiſtration of juſtice, in favour of thoſe of their own religion; for both theſe agree in that maxim, ſo deſtructive to ſociety, that no faith is to be kept with

with heretics, and that it is but a ſmall crime even to kill them. But it is to be hoped that in a community compoſed of many people, of different perſuaſions, ſuch as that of Senegal, that maxim will ſoon be exploded, as we have experienced in England and Holland. For thoſe mixed people obſerving that the morals of the generality of people, of all perſuaſions, are much the ſame; this, I ſay, greatly ſerves to cool their zeal and weaken their partiality. But let things come to the worſt, the remedy is at hand. For inſtance, if a Mahometan ſhould kill a Catholic, let the criminal be tryed, by a neutral jury of Engliſhmen and Pagans.

I ſhall recommend one thing more and then conclude, which is, that the Blacks may be allowed to ſell their proviſions, and merchandize for as much as they can, and that no prices may be fixed on any thing by authority: By this means every man's induſtry, would be encouraged to the greateſt degree, carrying him on to dangerous

adventures and perilous voyages in hopes of gain. And thoſe who may be poſſeſſed of the charter before mentioned, ought to conſider, that the higher the prices are, which they give for Slaves, Gold, Ivory &c. the larger quantities they will be able to procure. This is the true reaſon why trade flouriſhes more, when it is free and open, than when it is in the hands of a company, for companies always go on a narrow contracted principle, ſubverſive of commerce, and their own intereſts.

FINIS.